"Waif-o'-the-Sea," by Cyrus Townsend Brady

By HARRY ESTY DOUNCE.

TO call Cyrus Townsend Brady an abler novelist than Robert Louis Stevenson is simply to state a mensurable fact. He is abler by the difference between an able and an ordinary seaman. He knows the ropes from a fore royal halliard to a mizzen t'gallant buntline and can navigate a 700 ton square rigger, where R. L. S., the lubber, had to make his ship a schooner when she should have been a brig, and guiltily owned that even then his seamanship was "jimmy." Mr. Brady has the further advantage of being exhaustively read in a class of fiction which (hard as it is to believe, since Mr. Brady was not then writing) existed in Stevenson's day and seems to have been neglected by Stevenson altogether.

This further advantage earmarks every chapter Mr. Brady writes.

For instance, in his for the moment latest masterpiece, the heroine's male attire is seen through by the hero and the reader when the former is rendering surgical first aid, a mutinous savage devoid of the finer instincts having hit the young lady in the shoulder with an axe as she was romping about the tophamper saving everybody's life. Young Mr. Clough, the ship's third mate and the heroine's first in prospective, comes upon her secret and she comes to.

"Her face flamed with sudden red. Her eyes filled. The consciousness of the wound in her shoulder left her in the face of the demand of a greater crisis. The boy that had been a girl suddenly became a woman. Her modesty was to the fore" —luckily for her it had presumably been elsewhere during several years cruising on a whaler as a boy before the mast.

Mr. Clough "had good blood in him. He looked away. 'Forgive me,' he said with averted glance"—and immediately observed that he "must go to my cabin now for a change of clothes"—having peeled down to his summer weights in order to swim after the mutineers. He "turned away in awkward embarrassment."

The next chapter but one is entitled *The Making of a Boy*, but turns out to be the history of the heroine's masquerading. Meanwhile Mr. Clough, heroically getting the better of that good blood of his, has nerved himself to dress the girl's dangerous wound. "She faced the mate bravely and he devoted himself to his somewhat delicate task with the same courage." Delicacy could go no further. Yet good blood will tell; it will not be wholly denied: "He centred his gaze upon the task, scarcely daring to look at her till it was completed. . . . Finally he heaved a long sigh compounded of relief and regret and declared that he could do no more. And for that, in spite of his nervousness, he was very sorry." Even good blood is thicker than water. Warmer too, one regrets, as Mr. Pecksniff would, to say.

Next she came on deck "dressed like any and every other sailor lad. . . . Yet the loose, flowing white trousers, the short blue jacket, the laced cap covering her short curls, the flowing tie, her coquettish air spoke woman, nay, cried it aloud. The mate wondered how he could have been so blind. And now many things that had puzzled him were plain."

Probably they were obscured by the time she came on deck to kiss him in the starlight, for she was now "clothed in a dress proper to her sex, which she had carefully preserved in her chest, for what emergency she had not known." Yet with all the very nice feeling that put her into petticoats for the enterprise, *her* blood was not quite good. It was she who did the kissing and led up to it as follows:

"'It's not that I like you less, Miss—now that you are a woman, but things are so different.'

"'Why are they?' she asked, coming very near him.

"'Because I—you—oh, don't tempt me,' he pleaded desperately, trying to turn his head away—although this was no longer required of good blood since her change of dress—or to withdraw from her, an impossible task because she had caught him between the forward and after wheels of the steering gear.

"'Tempt you to what?' she asked with charming archness." Mr. Brady, by the way, is a master of coquetry and archness; his preface to this novel attains to great heights in both.

He has an art all his own in characterization through dialogue. Witness Old Broadrib, a Heart of Oak, who fought the Yankees under His Majesty's colors in 1812. Hark! to strains of Broadrib's tarry English—"You kin count that boy a man when it comes to stowin' away his share of the grub"—"Which I've stopped my growth for some time"—"I kin tell you some things that'll make you laugh fit to start a butt in your midship plankin'"—and at the juncture where the dear old chap catches the lovers kissing, the young lady having dressed up for it as usual—"My God! Cap'n Clough, Sir, wot in 'ell's the meanin' of all this? An' who in the name of God is this bloody female?"

The very name Broadrib is art, combining as it does the savor of the Roast Beef of Old England with a fine compliment to the memory of the late Sir Henry Irving, an English actor, whose real surname was similar, if memory serves us well.

The Admiral Brady is a mammalogist: "—— big fish, the common sailor name for the whale, which of course is not a fish at all." He is a stylist and a grammarian:—"words incoherent, meaningless to any one but she"—or: "Poor Ray was all in," which is not Broadrib, but Brady. And if it were not known, one could readily divine from Broadrib's language that Mr. Brady is a minister. And he is a modern psychologist.

Mr. Brady's plot innovations are electrifying. The revelation of Audrey's marywalkering is made on page 50. One recalls no other novel of this species in which it is made before page 92. As to events beyond page 128, your reporter must confess with profuse apologies that if he read further he has quite forgotten it. However, he confidently and cordially recommends Mr. Brady's new novel to everybody fond of reading novels by Mr. Brady.

WAIF OF THE SEA. By Cyrus Townsend Brady. A. C. McClurg & Co. $1.40.

Philip Goodman announces for publication early in 1919 a large volume of caricatures in color by Ralph Barton entitled *Faces and Facades*. The subjects will be contemporary literary men. Of the thirty-four caricatures in the book sixteen are Englishmen—Shaw, Chesterton, Wells, Conrad, Bennett, Galsworthy, Hardy, Leonard Merrick, Kipling, Hewlett, Augustine Birrell, Austin Dobson, Hilaire Belloc, William Archer, Max Beerbohm and Barrie. The Americans—only four in number—are Howells, Dreiser, H. L. Mencken and James Branch Cabell. Others in the volume are Yeats, James Stephens, James Joyce, "A. E.," George Moore, Dunsany, Anatole France, Maeterlinck, Verhaeren, Gorky, Hauptmann, Brandes, D'Annunzio and Schnitzler.